

Sauerkraut



NUTRITION:

Sauerkraut is a good source of vitamin C and iron and has only 44 calories per cup.

HOW TO SELECT:

Look for winter varieties. Select firm, solid, clean, mature cabbage. Loosely headed cabbage falls apart and is difficult to shred. Red varieties may be used but the product has a very unappetizing appearance.

PREPARATION:

Remove outer leaves, wash and drain the cabbage. Cut into quarters and remove the core. Shred or slice to thickness of a dime. Do not grind or chop as in making slaw.

PROCEDURE:

Traditionally, stone jars have been used to make kraut. Glass, enamelware, and food grade plastic containers should be used. Five gallon containers may be obtained from bakeries, restaurants, etc.

Place five pounds shredded cabbage in large containers such as a 48 quart ice chest. Add 3 tablespoons canning or pickling salt and mix well. Continue preparing five pound batches of salted cabbage until you have fifteen pounds of the mixture in the separate containers. Let it set for 30 minutes to 1 hour to allow the salt to draw out the juices.

To pack in fermentation container, place about 3 to 5 pounds at a time in the container and pack very firmly with a wooden potato mashers or a wooden tool of some kind. A new, clean pick handle with a 2"x 3" oval head works well for packing large containers and a small hammer handle for wide mouth quarts. When packed properly there should be 1 inch of brine over the cabbage. Fill larger containers to 3-4 inches of the top and quart jars to 1/2 inch of top.

Cabbage must be kept submerged in brine while ferments. Put three or more quarts of brine made from 4-1/2 tablespoons pickling salt to 3 quarts water in a large, heavy duty, food grade plastic bag. Place the brine-filled bag inside another bag for safety and use as a weight to hold the cabbage under the brine. If you use this method, do not disturb the fermentation container until fermentation is complete.

Place container in a warm area (70-75 degrees F). Place until fermentation is complete. The white spots on cabbage will disappear, kraut will be almost transparent and bubbling will cease in about 4-6 weeks.

Keep cabbage covered with brine. If necessary, add brine made by dissolving 1-1.2 tablespoons pickling salt in 1 quart water. (If you did not get 1-2 inches brine over the cabbage in 5 gallon containers or 1/2 inch in quart jars, you do not have the kraut packed tightly enough.)

To keep the cabbage under the brine when using quart jars, use 2 small wooden strips such as tongue depressors or small plastic bags filled with brine. Cut to about 4-inch lengths. Boil the strips and place them crisscross in the shoulder of the jar. Cover loosely and place in a shallow pan to catch overflow of brine. Place in a warm room as above until fermentation is complete.

Sauerkraut, page two

CANNING:

WATER BATH CAN

Prepare jars and lids according to manufacturer's instructions.

Hot Pack Bring kraut and brine slowly to a boil in a large kettle, stirring frequently. Remove from heat and fill jars firmly with kraut and juices leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Adjust lids and screw bands. Process in boiling water canner 10 minutes for pints and 15 minutes for quarts.

Cold Pack Fill jars firmly with unheated kraut and juices leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Add lids and screw bands and process 20 minutes for pints and 25 minutes for quarts. If you fermented the kraut in quart jars, just remove the wooden hold-down strips and proceed as above.

FREEZING:

Fill pint or quart freezer bags to about 2-3 inches of the top, squeeze out air, seal and label. (Freeze no more than 1 quart per cubic foot of freezer capacity in one day.)

REFRIGERATING:

Fully fermented kraut may be kept tightly covered in the refrigerator for several months.

NOTES:

1. A five gallon container will hold 30-35 pounds of properly packed kraut. A quart jar will hold two pounds.
2. Processing times given assume elevations of 1000 or less.
3. A two gallon freezer bag with zipper-type closure works very well as a container for brine to weigh down the kraut.
4. To determine best varieties of cabbage for kraut, check seed catalogue for your area or check with a market produce manager.

For more information call WSU Skagit County Extension:

360-428-4270

Or visit:

<http://skagit.wsu.edu/FAM/MFP.htm>

**HANDOUT DEVELOPED BY: WSU Master Food Preservers
Under the direction of
Joanne Austin, Skagit County Extension Faculty
WSU Skagit County Extension**